

## WHERE IS OUR EVERYWHERE?

The last line of the Gospel for today speaks of Jesus remaining outside of towns and staying in deserted places. While He is doing this, it says people kept coming to Him from everywhere. Where is our everywhere? Where is our starting point? Where are we a follower of Jesus? These are good questions to ponder in the season of Lent which begins this Wednesday. Where is our everywhere? When one is searching for Jesus to heal, and He has the power to heal, brokenness and disease become the starting point of the everywhere. When one is seeking an answer to a profound life question, that seeking sees Jesus as a wisdom speaker and the listening of His words can resonate from that starting point. When the everywhere is anger because prayers were not answered, the Jesus one is looking for is one that can be confronted. Our everywhere has a lot to do with what it is we find in Jesus.

Although I was raised in a Catholic family and we all went to church every Sunday, the time when I really began to seek and find Jesus is another question. It happened sometimes sitting in church while bored by the homily. It happened while I was daydreaming during the funeral Masses for my uncles. While my belief in heaven and the afterlife started in grade school, my starting point came from a sense that there was more going on than just what the Church could and can communicate. To me, Jesus was more than an answer; He was more than a listener to my personal woes. He was transcendent even beyond words. So my quest became to find those experiences in my life when without warning or protocol, Jesus crashes in and overwhelms me and humbles me all at once. They are fabulous to behold and I am never prepared for them, yet I know them while and after they happen. My everywhere is unique to me and it shapes my spirituality.

This Lent let us be brutally honest to admit where our everywhere really is. Let us search how we pray. Let us seek to uncover how this relationship grows or stagnates. Let us ask ourselves if the path ever changed? Each of us has our everywhere. We all have a starting point as to how we relate and why we relate to Jesus. When our Lent can be true to the starting point, He can be true to us.

May this Lent find us experiencing the delight of being received with joy by Jesus,



Father John Ouper